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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the use of part-time faculty or adjunct faculty at the University of Louisville (Kentucky); the challenges they present to program administrators, including their retention and meaningful involvement in program activities; and how the university motivates them. It is noted that part-time faculty differ in terms of their characteristics and motivation for teaching and require a reward system that responds to these differences. Examined is a series of incentives and rewards, through the Senior Lecturer Program, that was established by the school within the Preparatory Division for the part-time lecturers who teach developmental courses. The Senior Lecturer Program recognizes the experience and service of teachers by providing senior status to qualified lecturers who have taught for 3 years. The application process involves submitting documentation in three areas: excellent teaching service, significant program contributions, and professional development activities. Once approved for senior lecturer status, individuals receive selected benefits, including an increased rate of compensation. It is suggested that the Senior Lecturer Program illustrates one way to provide a reward system for part-time faculty and promote the integration of this important group. Contains 10 references. (GLR)

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Rewarding Part-time/Adjunct Faculty:
The Senior Lecturer Program

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ABSTRACT

Part-time faculty are utilized regularly in postsecondary education. The use of part-time or adjunct faculty presents several challenges to program administrators, including the rentention and meaningful involvement in program activities of these individuals. Part-time faculty differ in terms of their characteristics and motivation for teaching and require a reward system that responds to these differences.

A series of incentives and rewards has been established in the Preparatory Division of our institution for the part-time lecturers who teach developmental courses. The Senior Lecturer Program is an initiative that recognizes the experience and service of teachers. Once a lecturer has taught for three years, he/she may apply for senior status. The application process involves submitting documentation in three areas: excellent teaching service, significant program contributions, and professional development activities. Once approved for senior lecturer status, individuals have selected benefits, including an increased rate of compensation.

The Senior Lecturer Program has been renewed annually for three years. The program encourages involvement, and lecturers are active volunteers in a variety of projects. The Senior Lecturer Program illustrates one way to provide a reward system for part-time faculty and promote the integration of this important group.

REWARDING PART-TIME/ADJUNCT FACULTY: THE SENIOR LECTURER PROGRAM

One of the issues in postsecondary education today is the use of part-time faculty. Part-time faculty, most of whom are not tenurable, are utilized regularly in higher education. By 1980, an estimated one-third of the total of postsecondary faculty were part- timers, with community colleges employing the highest percentages and even research universities utilizing a significant number (AAUP, 1980). A National Education Association report (1988) concludes that part-time, temporary, and nontenure-track appointments are often clustered in some areas, including "remedial" programs (p. 10).

Although the use of part-time faculty has several benefits (Leslie, 1989), mainly the ability to do flexible staffing at minimum costs, the use of part-time faculty presents several challenges. Since these individuals often spend relatively little time on campus, communication problems with serious consequences may occur. Mortimer, Bagshaw, and Masland (1985) point out that it is "difficult to coordinate course content, develop uniform standards for students' performance, and establish continuity of instruction (p. 31)."

Dissatisfaction with status or conditions may lead to a high turnover rate of part-time faculty, another problem area. Various formal and informal titles (Wallace, 1984, p. 3) are applied to this category of

teachers, but they usually have in common short-term contracts with few benefits and may feel marginal in the institution. Gappa (1984) call for improvements for part-time faculty in many areas.

Programs which use part-time faculty have a responsibility to address these concerns. In recommending personnel policies, Biles and Tuckman (1986) recognize the necessity for the integration of part-timers into the academic community. Since good morale and program commitment contribute to the quality of services delivered, the challenge to administrators is to promote meaningful involvement of part-time faculty in program activities and to provide incentives for retention.

At our institution the Preparatory Division provides developmental courses for students and employs a relatively large number of part-time lecturers to teach these courses. We have devised a series of incentives and rewards for part-time lecturers and have developed some basic guidelines to follow.

One important guideline is that administrators must consider the individual needs and situations of part-time faculty in order to structure a satisfying environment. People engage in part-time teaching for different reasons. From a national survey, Tuckman (1978) concluded that there are seven motivational categories: "the semiretired, students, those wishing to become full-time (Hopeful Full-Timers), those with a full-time job (Full-Mooners), those with responsibilities in

the home (Homeworkers), those with another part-time job (Part-Mooners), and all others (Part-Unknowners)" (p. 307). He found that the largest segment of the total (27.6%) was the group who held full-time outside employment (p. 308).

Part-time faculty also possess a variety of characteristics which may influence their needs. The majority of the part-time lecturers who teach the developmental courses in our Division are women. Most of the lecturers hold a master's degree and have considerable teaching experience. While some would prefer full-time teaching, many have other full-time or part-time employment or interests. Since people teach on a part-time basis for several reasons and have varying characteristics, a reward system should have several elements which respond to a variety of needs. What is an important satisfier for some may be meaningless to others.

Another guideline is to listen to the concerns articulated by the people affected. In a recent survey of part-time lecturers at our institution, the issue of salary was found to have the highest priority (Thompson, 1989). Other concerns voiced by lecturers (Open Meeting, 1991) are the lack of administrative supports such as office space, the absence of fringe benefits (particularly health insurance), insufficient opportunities for professional development, and a general feeling that the work of lecturers is undervalued. All of these is-

sues may be directly or indirectly addressed by administrators who are responsible for the employment of part-time faculty.

A final guideline which has been effective is to adopt a threefold approach in attempting to improve the situation. The first step is to identify and inform part-time faculty about any existing benefits. Even small privileges serve to instill and reinforce a feeling of inclusion in the university community. General benefits identified at our institution include the following:

1. Option for Supplemental Tax Deferred Annuity account
2. Eligibility for membership in Health Center
3. Bookstore discount
4. Durable photo identification cards
5. Faculty privileges for library usage
6. Eligibility for award for Outstanding Faculty for Adults
7. Staff parking permits

After determining what benefits are already available, the second step is to initiate any improvements in conditions or benefits that are possible to institute at the unit level. For example, our Division has made it a priority to provide instructional support for lecturers. Each lecturer is assigned at least a desk or carrel and has access to a photocopier, typewriter, word processor, and telephone. Such provisions seem basic, but anecdotal evidence about lecturers seated in

stairwells and not having a designated location to receive mail speaks to the necessity for definite action. Indeed, the lack of such support creates the impression that part-time faculty are not recognized in very fundamental ways, even though some remedies cost relatively little.

Another decision which the Division has made is to set aside a small fund to be used for conference travel and for tuition reimbursement for lecturers. Lecturers are currently able to apply to a committee to be reimbursed for travel or for courses taken as professional development. Although the amount awarded is small, the programs are popular and receive numerous applications. The Division also gains the benefit of a better-prepared faculty when it supports lecturers' efforts at staff development.

The Division has also attempted to be responsive to specific lecturer concerns. For example, lecturers had requested a variable payment schedule. After some negotiation with the payroll department, that change was instituted. Regular staff meetings encourage communication and provide presentations on subjects of interest. A proposal is pending for an award for excellence in developmental teaching.

On a third front, the unit can be an advocate for other kinds of benefits that require approval from higher administration. Our Division

has been successful with some initiatives of this type. For example, we have justified a higher rate of payment to lecturers who possess a terminal degree. Another effort is the Senior Lecturer Program, which has been renewed annually for three years.

The Senior Lecturer Program recognizes the experience and leadership of part-time lecturers. Once a lecturer has taught for three years, he/she may apply for senior lecturer status. The application process involves submitting documentation in three areas: teaching service, program contributions, and professional development. Lecturers present evidence of creative teaching techniques and variety of experience as well as of a caring attitude for students. Program contributions may include mentoring new teachers, serving on a committee, staffing our tutoring service, or taking part in any number of curricular or outreach projects. Professional development activities range from publications to conference or workshop attendance.

Once approved for senior lecturer status, individuals have the following benefits, which are structured to address some of the expressed needs of lecturers:

1. Annual contracts
2. Increased rate of compensation
3. Preference for travel support
4. Preference for tuition reimbursement

5. Eligibility for an administrative role. Senior lecturers may apply to be released from teaching a course in order to act as a program assistant.

Currently there are seventeen senior lecturers in the Division who are engaged in a number of activities. The existence of the program is an incentive for new lecturers as well as a reward for the experienced lecturers who have qualified for senior status. The program helps to promote involvement. Lecturers take the opportunity to volunteer for numerous both paid and unpaid projects, including the following:

1. Mentoring new teachers
2. Program committee work
   (textbook selection, test revision, resource file maintenance)
3. Representation at local, state, and national conferences
4. Staff meeting presentations
5. Outreach services
   (high school partnership program; workshops in test preparation, speed reading, math topics, or study skills; placement test grading)
6. Research and data organization projects

The future of the Senior Lecturer Program depends upon the outcome of a University review of the status of all lecturers which may establish

University-wide guidelines. The Preparatory Division's Senior Lecturer Program was one of the models considered in the review.

In conclusion, the use of part-time faculty seems to be firmly entrenched in postsecondary education. While an ideal situation would include creating more regular full-time faculty appointments, budgetary constraints make this scenario unlikely. Administrators, then, must recognize the services provided by part-time faculty and take whatever steps are possible to ensure equitable treatment and promote the integration of this important group. The Senior Lecturer Program illustrates one such step.

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